



Testimony of Renee E. Beeker
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MI NOW

Submitted to the House Health Policy Committee
Hearing on Emergency Contraceptive Nonprescription dispensing
June 6, 2006

My name is Renee Beeker and I am the President of the Michigan Conference of the National Organization for women. NOW is the oldest and largest feminist activist organization in the United States, advocating for women=s equal rights of which Michigan has more then 5000 members and supporters. I would like to thank Representative Edward Gaffney for the opportunity to voice our concerns here today.

Michigan NOW is opposed to HB 5311

Michigan Women are navigating in a hostile environment when it comes to personal reproductive health care management. Michigan Women are faced with many roadblocks restricting access to medications which should be available for their reproductive health care needs. Even after receiving a prescription for contraception medications, a women may still be faced with a pharmacist's refusal, in another organized effort to limit her access to certain prescription medication.

A 2001 study conducted by the Alan Guttmacher Institute concluded that emergency contraception, if readily dispensed, would cause a 43% reduction of the approximate 1.37 million abortions that occur each year in this country. This translates into almost 600,000 fewer abortions annually! If EC were dispensed worldwide, it could dramatically reduce the nearly 46 million abortions each year. Notwithstanding the obvious financial impact, the reduction in health risk and mental trauma is immeasurable. According to the Center for Reproductive Rights, of the 210 million women who become pregnant each year worldwide, about 80 million of these pregnancies are unplanned.

HB 5311 would place yet another roadblock for women, further to denying access to reproductive health care. Requiring women to get a prescription that then must be presented to the keeper and dispenser of all drugs. All this will very possibly insure that Michigan women will be denied access to emergency contraception in a timely fashion.

Providing the morning after pill without prescription provides not only the medication in timely fashion but takes away the barriers and roadblocks to Michigan women's health care needs.

Women who have suffered a rape or malfunction in their birth control methods should have available to her in timely fashion a backup plan. Emergency Contraception is just that, for emergencies. It should be available to women 24 hours a day, without prescription.

Its time for Michigan Women to have their health care needs provided. Without delays, without roadblocks.

Thank you